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ADDRESS

TO THE PEOPLE OF LOUISIANA.

BY GOVERNOR WM. P. KELLOGG.

STATE OF LOUISIANA,
Executive Department,
New Orleans, May 10, 1873.)

A partisan press has teemed with such misrepresentations regarding myself and the government I in part represent, a gentleman who assumes to be entitled to the office I now hold has been so prolific in his addresses to the public in advocacy of his assumptions from his own peculiar and personal standpoint, the so called Committee of Two Hundred has been so industrious in the publication of views not only calculated to mislead the public in the formation of opinion, but to seduce it into actions that tend toward anarchy and further bloodshed, an organization of malcontent and disappointed politicians, especially in New Orleans, have labored so hard to carry out their treasonable programme of tax resistance, with the avowed purpose of overthrowing the lawfully established government of the State, the public have been so studiously prevented by the press, and what was called the Fusion Legislature, from coming to a knowledge of the efforts that have been made to effect an adjustment of political difficulties that ought to have been satisfactory to all, except disappointed office seekers, that in justice to myself I deem it a duty to address you.

I waive other than a mere reference to the coalition formed with the late executive, before the recent election, by which it was agreed that as a reward for betraying the Republican party, and turning the State over to the Democracy, he was to be sent to the United States Senate—a coalition which shocked the moral sense of the people at home and abroad—the fraudulent means used to effect the objects of that coalition—the open and unblushing frauds perpetrated at the ballot boxes—the mutilated and fraudulent returns, some of

them concocted in this city days after the election—the oft en repeated declaration throughout the State that the Fusion candidates would be declared elected, notwithstanding whether they received a majority of the votes cast or not—the avowed intention to carry the election by any means—all these things are so unquestionable and notorious that I need only appeal to the candor and conscience of the leaders of the opposition in two-thirds of the parishes of the State to confirm them. It is also only necessary to allude to the machinations of the politicians who last spring and summer threw away the opportunity of co-operating with Republicans upon the basis of reform of State abuses, or to the glaring inconsistency and short-sighted expediency of the men who in June last refused to put forward the best Republicans, and educated colored men of large property, and acknowledged intelligence, but who, after forming the Fusion ticket, at their barbecues and public meetings practiced social equality to gull the colored people into support of themselves, and into voting against the illustrious chieftain whose genius, both in war and peace, had secured to them the immeasurable blessings of freedom and equality of citizenship.

Are men who, to gratify a lust for office, were ready to enter into a partnership of fraud with an executive whom for years they had denounced as intamou, who were willing to retain and take advantage of the election and registration laws, which they had condemned as unbearably oppressive and unjust, and who now band themselves together behind the bulwark of their wealth to avoid payment of their just share of the burdens of the government, while the poor are left to shift for themselves—are such men fit to lead a party or to administer a government? Is a party that can raise no

GOVERNOR KELLOGG'S ADDRESS.

ce of indignation against the barbarous massacre at Colfax—no matter what its opinions of its origin—fit to govern a people composed in half at least of the race massacred, or is it entitled to the consideration and sympathy of good men, to whatever race they may belong? Civilized mankind will say it is not. I submit that these self-constituted leaders are no more exponents of the real wealth and intelligence of the white race in Louisiana than are the negroes whom their representatives murdered, and whose assassination they decidedly approve. I can but believe that a majority of the white people of Louisiana prefer living in harmony with their colored neighbors, and are willing to accord to them their legal constitutional rights. Wearied of a vain resistance to the dominant party of the Union as well as to the federal administration, I believe they do not wish to prolong war under the guise of peace. But an intolerant and fictitious public opinion, manufactured by designing politicians, and a partisan press, prevent them from giving expression to what their good sense and a better judgment suggest.

Firmly believing that I received a majority of the votes cast at the late election, and was elected in spite of the most stupendous frauds—a fact which many of the more candid Fusionists have repeatedly admitted to me—I appealed to the courts to assert my rights. While the suits were pending, knowing that if I could obtain access to the returns I could easily establish the fact of my election, I offered, through one of my counsel, an old and distinguished citizen, to abide by any reasonable arbitrament, expressing a willingness to leave the counting of the returns to three or five disinterested and unprejudiced citizens. This offer was declined, and the reason assigned was that Governor Warmoth would not agree to it. Subsequently, by one of his own judges, a decision was rendered against the illegal action of the then Executive in the matter of the returning board. This judge was deposed by violence, and another judge commissioned and installed in his place, before the votes had been counted or any returns made; but finally the issue both in the federal and State courts was decided in favor of the returning board, which declared myself, the Republican State ticket and a Republican Legislature elected.

During the excitement which preceded my installation as Governor I was

desirous, and at all times expressed a willingness, to favor an adjustment, on a fair and equitable basis. After I was inaugurated, the chairman of the Republican State Committee made an offer to leading members of the Fusion party to seat forty-five members of the lower house, and a number of Senators. This proposition met the approbation of many of the leaders of the party. It was rejected, in part, on the alleged ground that we would not reseal the six expelled Senators who had deserted their seats and betrayed their constituencies by going into the Fusion assemblage.

At all times after this there was a disposition on the part of leading men of the Republican party and of the Legislature to make any reasonable adjustment.

It will be borne in mind that the composition of our Legislature, alleged to be inimical to wholesome legislation, was the strong objection made to our government. Without admitting the justice of this objection—which, indeed, is abundantly disproved by contrasting the action of the present Legislature with that of past Legislatures, or even with that of the body styling itself a legislature which met at Odd Fellows' Hall, which passed no reform measures—we yet were willing to concede to the opposition such a representation as even they admitted would enable them, acting in concert with Republican members known to be in favor of reform, to secure the passage of such measures as would tend to correct existing abuses, to restore public credit, and to develop the internal resources of the State. The proposed adjustment would have given a white majority in both branches of the Legislature, and, as they themselves conceded, would have enabled the opposition, if so disposed, to prevent all questionable legislation, had any such been attempted, and to insure economy, reform and the advancement of the material interests of the State. Repeated conferences were had with the authorized committees of the Fusionists, at their own instance, with a view to an adjustment, and I believe they will do me the justice to say that they were convinced of my sincerity in desiring such a consummation.

During the last days of the session a committee authorized by the Odd Fellows' Hall assemblage waited upon myself and others, and finally it was understood that a proposition to seat forty-five Fusionists

in the lower house, and eleven Senators, would be satisfactory to the majority.

With commendable patriotism and self-sacrifice, members of the lower house, sufficient in number to make up the required forty-five, with those Fusionists returned by the legal board, came forward and signed a written pledge to resign their seats in favor of those claiming to represent their respective districts then sitting in the Fusion assemblage. A written pledge was also made by a majority of the Senate that they would seat nearly or quite the required number of Senators, in addition to those returned by the legal board, it being conceded, for the purpose of this proposed adjustment, that the contesting Senators had received a majority of the votes cast in their respective districts. We had satisfactory assurances from our friends, both in Washington and here, that this adjustment, if effected, would be approved.

I was well aware that my action in this matter would tend to bring upon me the suspicion of my own party, and every kind of discontent and misconstruction from both my friends and opponents, but I was willing to risk all this, if, by so doing, I could reasonably expect to restore harmony and prosperity to the State. Yet, while I was doing this, in the interests of the State, certain prominent Fusionists were endeavoring to negotiate a trade with Lieutenant Governor Antoine, by which he and other colored men were to desert me and join them.

Right at this juncture it was insisted, among other things, that the old Warmoth Senators who had seceded from the Legislature, and had subsequently been expelled, should be re-seated, and in a caucus of the opposition the question was sprung that no proposition would be entertained that did not include the readmission of these Senators. It was generally admitted that several of them had been fraudulently declared elected in 1870, that they did not represent the districts from which they were accredited, that their legislative career had been such as gave no reasonable assurances that they would work in the interest of reform or that they had the prosperity of the State at heart. Yet, the combined efforts of these men, their urgent appeals to their associates in Odd Fellows' Hall, added to the votes of those who were opposed to any adjustment at all, resulted in the adoption of a resolution by the Fusion body that no

adjustment would be acceded to that did not include these expelled Senators. Here again the influence which has been the bane of Louisiana made itself felt, and these Warmoth Senators, who had seceded from the legal Legislature, in order to carry out the original compact looking to the destruction of the Republican party, contributed largely, at least, to the defeat of an adjustment so nearly reached.

An appeal to arms was made. The opposition—though they had specifically declared, through the person claiming to be their Attorney General, that they only desired to inaugurate their government so as to obtain a legal status and make a case for the courts—procured arms and munitions of war, and made a systematic effort to organize a militia for the avowed purpose of overthrowing the established government. This militia was scattered by the local authorities, and the next day the Odd Fellows' Hall assemblage was dispersed.

More recently, when the Committee of Two Hundred took the matter of adjustment in hand, I met their sub-committee by invitation, together with leading men of my own party, both white and black, and the result was a proposition to seat forty-five Fusion members in the lower House and ten Fusion Senators, including those already in the Legislature and those returned by the legal returning board, with an additional assurance that there should be a fair hearing in all contested cases. The sub-committee, I believe, reported in favor of this proposition, but the Committee of Two Hundred replied that "the proposition of compromise submitted to them through their sub-committee was not such as they deemed proper to recommend."

It will be thus seen that all efforts in the direction of an adjustment have failed. None of these proposed concessions were made because we had the least fear of the overthrow of our government, but because we wished peace; because we wished to satisfy the opposition as far as possible regarding the Legislature. If the failure to effect a satisfactory adjustment be a calamity, as many insist and many more admit, the fault does not rest with myself, nor with the Republican party, nor with the national administration. The responsibility lies with the Fusion assemblage, and with the Fusion pretenders to office and their allies and abet-

tors. Every effort on our part to effect an adjustment which would be satisfactory to the whole people, white as well as colored, was taken as an evidence of weakness. Charges of bad faith were made against acts which could have had no possible motive except to allay public excitement and restore public confidence. It would even seem from recent events that a continuance of agitation in a more violent form has been almost the only result of the efforts of the State government and of the Republican party to give the much needed and much desired repose to the people; and it has become evident that nothing short of the complete abdication of the State government will satisfy those Fusion leaders, who live upon tumult and keep alive dissension to further their own selfish ends.

While desirous, therefore, that there should be a fair hearing in all cases of contest growing out of the late election, whether in the courts, or when the Legislature shall again meet, I am compelled to discard all idea of present adjustment, and, without turning to the right hand or to the left, I shall proceed in the discharge of my constitutional duties, as Governor of the State, until I am deposed or dispossessed by rightful authority. It is impossible for me to believe that the people of this State prefer anarchy to order, war to peace, ruin to prosperity, and no government at all, if they can not get that which presumes without any of the machinery, appliances, or authority of a government, to call itself the government of their choice, to that which is to-day the existing government of Louisiana. The present government represents a party known to be in the majority in this State. It is the only one recognized by the national executive. It is declared to be the legal government by the courts of the United States and by the inferior and Supreme courts of this State. The Senate of the United States, by its action, practically approved it as the rightful government of Louisiana. The members of Congress holding certificates of election under it have been placed upon the roll of Congress as the legal members for Louisiana. The Mayor and Council of this city, the judges, sheriffs, coroners and other officers of the city, and throughout the State, hold commissions and exercise authority under it. There is no one anywhere in this State, that I am aware of, exercising

legitimate official functions as a State officer under any other authority. The opposition have neither the substance nor the shadow of a government of any kind, and there is not now, nor has there ever been, the slightest chance of their recognition by the political or judicial power of the nation. Whatever may be the views of some people as to the *de facto* or *de jure* status of the present government, all must admit it is the only government in the State, and must remain so, at least till the national authority shall determine otherwise. Upon myself, therefore, and the other officers of this government, falls the responsibility of sustaining it in the interests of public order, and for the prevention of anarchy. The very men who are now clamoring against the State government would be loudest in their denunciation if we failed in the discharge of our duties and allowed lawless violence, such as so recently disgraced this city, to prevail unpunished. Disagreeable as that duty is, it is my purpose to enforce the laws and to maintain the authority of the State, and much as I may shrink from the exercise of harsh remedies, I feel bound to apply them wherever necessary. The people are paying their taxes, burdensome as those taxes were made under the late administration, with remarkable alacrity. The State has already paid off \$160,000 of overdue interest left as legacy by the outgoing administration, and will soon, I trust, be in a position to pay its current coupons. Every dollar received for interest is scrupulously appropriated to that purpose, and the State officers are further endeavoring to restore to the interest fund, where it belongs, that considerable portion of the delinquent taxes which by a law passed under the late regime, was applied to the payment of registered warrants. The tax resisting movement, though systematically organized, has proved a failure. In one district alone of the city the collections since the first of March have been more than double the amount paid into the treasury for licenses for the whole of last year, and the collection is still going on. Startling disclosures are daily being brought to light of the gross inequalities and frauds which characterized the assessment and collection of taxes and licenses under the late administration. The efforts put forth to organize armed resistance in the country parishes have been equally unsuccessful; and the recently uttered threat of the late executive that he would compel President

Grant to station troops in every parish where a disturbance could be created if he attempted to sustain in Louisiana a government friendly to his administration, has resulted, so far, only in the *fiascos* of Tangipahoa, Livingston and St. Martin.

There are three classes who are mainly responsible for the agitation which now afflicts the State. First, a body of worthy citizens unversed in politics, some of whom did not even vote at the last election, who have been blindly misled into the belief that no portion of the present State government was elected. Second, disappointed politicians dependent upon office for their livelihood. Third, the men connected with the monopolies and fraudulent schemes originated under the late administration, and whose only chance of protecting their interests, now threatened by my administration, and of preventing the shameful robberies perpetrated upon the people from being brought to light lies in agitation and anarchy. The public disorders and the sentiments of ostracism and antagonism engendered by these three classes, aided by a subsidised partisan press, are a standing menace preventing capital and labor from coming here. The tide of immigration turns aside from the tempting climate and productive soil of this State, and the army of European laborers, warned away by lawlessness and insecurity,

passes on to Texas or the West. The State is yearning for the aid of foreign capital to renew its levees, foreign labor to revive its agriculture. But it is absurd for any community that encourages lawlessness to hope for the confidence of the capitalist or the aid of the industrious laborer. Nothing can save the State but the enforcement of laws that will insure to all citizens security in the peaceful exercise of all their rights. Prosperity can only come to Louisiana when laws are enforced, when turbulence is put down, when hostility of races ends, and when all citizens are willing to accord to each other what the law and justice and good policy demand.

It is my earnest desire to establish a just and economical government, to restore public credit, to reduce the present taxation, and to promote the internal improvements which the State so much needs. I, therefore, appeal to all good citizens to support me in the execution of the laws, the preservation of the peace and the suppression of that lawless violence which has so injuriously affected the interests of the city and State. To this end, I am determined to employ all the resources of the State, and to invoke, if necessary, the power of the general government.

WILLIAM P. KELLOGG,

Governor of Louisiana.

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